

24 November 2023

Our Ref Cabinet Panel on the Environment 6  
December 2023  
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To: Members of the Committee: Councillors (Chair), (Vice-Chair), Amy Allen, Steve Jarvis, Cathy Brownjohn, Dominic Griffiths, Chris Hinchliff, David Levett, Gerald Morris, Michael Muir and Louise Peace

Substitutes: Councillors David Barnard, Ruth Brown, Juan Cowell, Bryony May, Tamsin Thomas and Daniel Wright-Mason

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A**

**MEETING OF THE CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

to be held in the

**REMOTE MEETING**

On

**WEDNESDAY, 6TH DECEMBER, 2023 AT 7.30 PM**

Yours sincerely,

Jeanette Thompson  
Service Director – Legal and Community

**\*\*MEMBERS PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU DOWNLOAD ALL AGENDAS AND REPORTS VIA THE MOD.GOV APPLICATION ON YOUR TABLET BEFORE ATTENDING THE MEETING\*\***

## **Agenda** **Part I**

<b>Item</b>		<b>Page</b>
<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	Members are required to notify any substitutions by midday on the day of the meeting.  Late substitutions will not be accepted and Members attending as a substitute without having given the due notice will not be able to take part in the meeting.	
<b>2. MINUTES - 27 SEPTEMBER 2023</b>	To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 27 September 2023.	(Pages 5 - 10)
<b>3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>	Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the Chair of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest, wishing to exercise a 'Councillor Speaking Right', must declare this at the same time as the interest, move to the public area before speaking to the item and then must leave the room before the debate and vote.	
<b>4. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS</b>	Members should notify the Chair of other business which they wish to be discussed at the end of either Part I or Part II business set out in the agenda. They must state the circumstances which they consider justify the business being considered as a matter of urgency.  The Chair will decide whether any item(s) raised will be considered.	
<b>5. INFORMATION NOTE: WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2023/24</b>	This note highlights proposed items scheduled in the work programme for the Cabinet Panel on the Environment for 2023/24, agreed at the initial meeting. The Work Programme at Appendix A highlights the agreed topics.	(Pages 11 - 18)
<b>6. PRESENTATIONS</b>	To receive presentations on topics including waste disposal, waste service updates and waste at Christmas. Following this the Chair will lead a discussion with Members and public.	
<b>7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</b>	To receive petitions, comments and questions from the public.	



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# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

## NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

MEETING HELD IN THE REMOTE MEETING  
ON WEDNESDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER, 2023 AT 7.30 PM

#### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillors: Amy Allen, Steve Jarvis, Chris Hinchliff, Michael Muir and Louise Peace

**In Attendance:**

*Georgina Chapman (Policy & Strategy Team Leader), Ellie Hollingsworth (Policy & Strategy Trainee), Omar Ezzet (Strategic Planning Officer), Nigel Smith (Strategic Planning Manager), Marc Wilcox (Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategy Project Manager – Hertfordshire County Council) and Eleanor Hopcraft (Committee, Member & Scrutiny Officer)*

**Also Present:**

*At the commencement of the meeting approximately 4 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

*Councillor Val Bryant was also present.*

#### 74 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

*Audio recording – 1:22*

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gerald Morris and David Levett.

Councillors Cathy Brownjohn and Dominic Griffiths were absent.

*N.B. Councillor David Levett was marked as absent on the Decision Sheet, however he had provided his apologies prior to the meeting.*

#### 75 MINUTES - 19 JULY 2023

*Audio recording – 1:45*

Councillor Amy Allen, as Chair, moved the minutes for approval and it was:

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 19 July 2023 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

#### 76 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Audio recording – 2:21*

- (1) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.

**77 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

*Audio recording – 3:09*

There was no other business notified.

**78 INFORMATION NOTE: WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2023/24**

*Audio recording – 3:36*

The Policy and Strategy Team Leader provided a verbal update on the Work Programme for the 2023/24 civic year and advised:

- The theme for the meeting was sustainable development. The meeting in December would focus on Waste and the March meeting would be on Achievements.
- The Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan had been revised as part of the Hertfordshire Climate Change Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP).
- The second round of the Solar Together Scheme was open until 27 October 2023. Communications had gone out to Community Groups and Parish Councils on the Scheme.
- Work was ongoing on a draft climate-related risks log for North Hertfordshire, which was part of the work of HCCSP adaptations sub-group.
- The Home Upgrade Grant Round Two was due to be launched, with a marketing plan underway to get communications out to eligible households.
- Work was ongoing on the London Luton Airport Expansion Documents. Relevant areas were being reviewed to ascertain whether previous concerns had been addressed and if remaining concerns had been incorporated into required documentation.
- There was work underway on heat decarbonisation plans for the three leisure centres, which were the top energy using and emitting buildings in the Estate.
- The Council had recently launched a Community Investment Fund, where community groups could apply for funding for capacity-building activities.
- The Action Tracker had been amended to only include actions that the Council could meaningfully influence on.
- Two actions on the tracker had not yet started, as they were awaiting the appointment of the Waste Awareness Officer in 2024.

The following participants asked questions:

- Councillor Amy Allen
- John Webb

In response to the questions, the Policy and Strategy Team Leader advised:

- Community groups had to be non-profit to be eligible for the Community Investment Fund. They also had to comply with the Grant policy of the Council and show that they had a good governance structure.
- Organisations that had received more than £10k from the Council recently were ineligible to apply for this funding.
- The Council asked for groups applying for funding to have a Safeguarding Policy as a minimum. Previously, groups had applied without a Policy and the Council was able to provide them with guidance on safeguarding templates so they would become eligible to the grant funding.
- The funding needed to be allocated by the end of the financial year, and rolling applications would be accepted.
- Eligible organisations did not have to involve volunteering, but the funding would only apply to capacity-building activities.

79 SUSTAINABILITY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

*Audio recording – 17:10*

The Strategic Planning Officer provided an update, with slides and advised:

- The Sustainability Strategic Planning Document (SPD) provided detailed advice and guidance on policies within the Local Plan.
- The SPD was not part of the Development Plan but would be a material consideration for planning applications.
- Sustainability referred to the means by which we meet our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- The scope of the SPD included passive design, transport, water and materials.
- The SPD provided technical guidance in areas such as climate change mitigations, energy efficiency, sustainable locations and transport.
- Benchmarks would be set for developers. Bronze indicated that the developer was policy compliant, with Silver and Gold showing developers who had gone higher than what was required in the Local Plan.
- There would be a mandatory requirement of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) from November. This was included in the SPD with 10% BNG representing Bronze or baseline requirement and higher gains considered Silver or Gold.
- Further detail on different scales and types of development was provided in the appendix.
- The draft SPD was due to be presented to Cabinet in November. Subject to approval by Cabinet, the SPD would go out for consultation.

The following participants asked questions:

- Councillor Michael Muir
- Deolinda Eltringham
- John Webb
- Councillor Steve Jarvis
- Roger Lovegrove
- Councillor Amy Allen
- Councillor Chris Hinchliff
- Julia Sonander

In response to the questions, the Strategic Planning Officer and Strategic Planning Manager advised:

- The SPD would not be able to enforce the building of solar panels on south-facing roofs, but it could be considered in the upcoming Local Plan Review.
- There were opportunities for developers to be encouraged to make these more sustainable decisions.
- The SPD included a section on providing energy efficient appliances within homes, however gas supply could not be ruled out completely.
- The SPD could not introduce wholly new policies at this stage. The Bronze, Silver and Gold approach was aimed at strongly encouraging developers to make provision to meet higher standards. This would count in their favour in the planning balance when applications were considered.
- The Council was limited on what could be enforced that was not within the current Local Plan. Introducing formal policy or an outright requirement would be for the Local Plan Review.
- Retrofitting was included within the SPD.

Councillor Amy Allen commented that some gas supply infrastructure needed to be kept as there could be a switchover to alternatives in the future, and it would be advantageous to keep the infrastructure in place.

Councillor Steve Jarvis commented that the gas industry was keen to replace methane with hydrogen, but there were issues with its production. It would be much more efficient to use renewable energy through a heat pump.

Deolinda Eltringham commented that the use of hydrogen gas had many issues, such as the production of nitrogen dioxide and leaks.

## 80 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

*Audio recording – 50:24*

The Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Recovery Strategy Project Manager from Hertfordshire County Council gave a presentation with slides and advised:

- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was a mechanism within the planning system to deliver improvements to local diversity. The programme would be rolled out in phases, with major developments within the first phase.
- All major developments would need to deliver at least 10% BNG, which must be secured for a minimum of 30 years.
- Developers and landowners needed to be aware of the costs associated with delivering BNG over 30 years.
- The first phase was meant to start in November 2023, but had been delayed to next year. Small sites would still be rolled out in April 2024.
- Delivering gains onsite should be prioritised over offsite. Offsite gains were expected in some cases but should be near the site where possible.
- Where there was no onsite or offsite possibility, there was a national credit system to deliver gains. Evidence would have to be provided to show that you had exhausted all onsite and offsite options.
- The Site Matching Service aimed to connect those seeking BNG sites within Hertfordshire and request information on available sites.
- There were separate processes for offering and seeking sites.
- To advertise a site on the service, the minimum information that would need to be provided was habitat information, site location and site size. Providing additional information such as a site survey would improve matching chances.
- Sites are matched by criteria such as habitat types, BNG units and strategic significance.
- A single flat fee would cover listing and submitting a request for a site. If no matches were found within 3 months, the site could be relisted for free, or a refund would be given.

The following participants asked questions:

- Councillor Steve Jarvis
- Councillor Michael Muir
- Deolinda Eltringham
- John Webb
- Councillor Chris Hinchliff

In response to the questions, the Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Recovery Strategy Project Manager advised:

- Once BNG became mandatory, developers and landowners would have to maintain BNG on the site for 30 years.



- The Sustainable Hertfordshire ambition aimed to deliver 20% biodiversity enhancement on County-owned developments and land by 2030.
- At the design stage for BNG sites, the ecologists would consider if the habitat would be appropriate for a future climate. Landowners would also have to think about incurred costs, such as fencing and management.
- A S106 agreement could be used to protect BNG sites. DEFRA would be providing a new legal mechanism called Conservation Covenants which could be used to protect BNG sites.
- BNG sites could be used for economic uses as long as it did not negatively affect the habitat.
- When a planning application is received for a BNG site, the Natural England Framework would be used to determine the BNG unit score of the site.
- The service aimed to get the best offer of BNG sites within the County, and would try to deliver BNG on local land.

## 81 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

*Audio recording – 1:46:03*

Roger Lovegrove gave a presentation and advised:

- The Council had declared a climate emergency, and exceptional things needed to be done to ensure developments were built to a high standard.
- LETI (London Energy Transport Initiative) had established alternative building standards. These exceed the current building regulations and could be added to the Sustainability SPD and Local Plan.
- LETI standards were normally used in one-off builds but should be relevant to whole estate developments.
- Using the standards outlined by LETI, homes would need only 3 kilowatts of heating.
- These homes would cost more to build, but this could be balanced against the running costs.
- Alternatives to standard bricks included wooden frames filled with rigid insulation.

Councillor Steve Jarvis commented that Mr Lovegrove had set out some interesting points in his presentation, and Central Government needed to give local authorities the capacity to be able to build environmentally friendly homes.

The Strategic Planning Officer commented that there was limit with what could be done within the Local Plan. The Sustainability SPD mentioned building standards and LETI as an aspiration for developers within the Gold Standard.

John Webb drew attention to the recent launch of the EV charging points strategy by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) for future discussion. The strategy aimed to provide more charging points so residents and businesses would be able to charge their vehicles conveniently. The aim of the strategy was for 2030, with a minimum of 3,000 public charging points needed in the County.

Councillor Amy Allen commented on the distribution of EV charging points in Letchworth and the issues surrounding ownership and infrastructure to support EV charging. There had been issues in a new development in Royston with on-street charging points.

Councillor Steve Jarvis noted that Watford already had a significant volume of on-street EV charging points. More off-street charging points were due to be installed across North Hertfordshire, and more progress was likely to be made due to the new HCC strategy.

**Wednesday, 27th September, 2023**

Councillor Amy Allen thanked those who attended the meeting and advised that the next Cabinet Panel on 6 December 2023 would focus on Waste.

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm

Chair

**CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT**  
**6<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2023/24**

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS FOR: Environment and Leisure & Recycling and Waste Management

PRIORITY: SUSTAINABILITY / A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This note highlights proposed items scheduled in the work programme for the Cabinet Panel on the Environment for 2023/24, agreed at the initial meeting. The Work Programme at Appendix A highlights the agreed topics.
- 1.2 The Cabinet Panel aims to set a work programme which will enable open discussion that may lead to recommendations to Cabinet /the relevant Executive Members or Service Director, regarding actions that they believe that the Council should be taking to address climate and environmental issues.
- 1.3 This meeting will focus on the topic of Sustainable Development, including a progress update on the council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Sustainability, and an update on what is being done to support Biodiversity Net Gain implementation at a county-level.
- 1.4 The Action Tracker was reviewed and amended ahead of the September Environment Panel meeting with a view to improving its effectiveness and clarifying the areas and ways in which the Council can have a meaningful influence.

**2. STEPS TO DATE**

- 2.1 Cabinet approved the establishment of the Cabinet Panel for the Environment at the 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019 meeting. The amended terms of reference were tabled for the Full Council meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> June<sup>1</sup>. The Constitutional Amendment Report of the 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023<sup>2</sup> recommended that this Panel is the only remaining panel for 2023.

2.2 By way of update to the Panel, we have been involved in the following work:

**2.3 Contributions to the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP)**

We attended and presented at the HCCSP's annual event on November 7<sup>th</sup>. Our presentation highlighted the changes to and priorities of the latest version of the Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan, as well as our plans to conduct a full review of the plan once the Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy has further progressed. The event gave attendees the chance to feedback on the action plans and we will be looking to incorporate this feedback shortly.

The second round of Solar Together has now closed. 872 people from North Herts registered interested in solar pv through the scheme, with a further 42 registering for battery storage only. As of Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November, 145 households from North Herts have accepted their

<sup>1</sup> [Appendix B - Revised Terms of Reference for Cabinet Panel on the Environment.pdf \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Constitutional amendment report 18.4.23.docx \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)

recommendation, with 133 of those also adding battery storage to their system. 6 of the 42 in North Herts who registered for battery storage only have accepted their offer. The most popular reasons for declining offers both across Hertfordshire and within North Herts were the cost of the offers and personal financial situation. According to iChoosr's assessment the price achieved for the average 14-panel system within this scheme is 34% cheaper than the typical market price for an equivalent system.

We have compiled a draft climate-related risks log. This identifies risks to council services and to the district from climate impacts (extreme heat; flooding; drought; storms). This is part of the Adaptation subgroup work to ensure there is a log of climate risks across the county. This risk log has been sent out to the relevant service areas to check over and highlight any mitigative or response action that they currently take around climate risks.

## **2.4 Home Upgrade Grant 2 (HUG2)**

The Home Upgrade Grant phase 2 is now open to applications. The scheme is available for off-gas properties. Those who live in a property EPC rated D,E,F, or G and who have a household income of below £31,000 per year are eligible to sign up for home energy efficiency improvements. We have started contacting stakeholders in our target areas and will shortly be sending out a mailout to potentially eligible properties in Hitchwood, Offa, and Hoo. More information about the scheme and how to sign up can be found on our webpage. [Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home-upgrade-grant-phase-2)

## **2.5 Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme**

We have had heat decarbonisation plans created for North Herts Leisure Centre, Hitchin Swimming Centre, and Royston Leisure. We have utilised these plans to submit an application to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme for works to decarbonise our leisure facilities. We will find out the outcome of our application by mid-March 2024 and update the panel accordingly.

## **2.6 Engagement and Eco-festivals**

The Council continue to provide relevant updates on the Climate Hive engagement page and attended the recent Baldock eco-festival.

## **2.7 Community Investment Fund**

The council's Community Investment Fund closed for applications on 26<sup>th</sup> November. Community groups were able to apply to the fund for capacity building projects which will ultimately enable the delivery of community value. Climate/environment/sustainability projects were listed in the criteria as an example of community value. The applications are now being assessed.

## **3. INFORMATION TO NOTE**

3.1 Our Environment inbox is a means for members of the public or organisations to provide suggestions/presentations for the panel's consideration. The address is - [EnvironmentPanel@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:EnvironmentPanel@north-herts.gov.uk)

3.2 The Panel could choose to accept suggestions from outside the meeting including:

- Suggestions by Members of the public or organisations either at the meeting or by email.
- Recommendations from Council, Cabinet or any other Committee.
- Suggestions by any Member of the Council.

- Suggestions by any Officer of the Council.

3.3 The Panel will seek to ensure that consideration of agenda items minimises additional burdens on staff resources. Wherever possible, requests are made for the presentation of documents already in existence rather than the production of new documents specifically for the Panel. Suggestions from outside sources, as detailed in paragraph 3.2 will only be placed on the work programme if agreed by one of the alternating Chairs or at a meeting of the Panel.

3.4 Attendance from external bodies and members of the public is actively encouraged.

3.5 This is a non-decision-making advisory body and therefore this or any notes/reports to the Panel do not include a recommendation on a key Executive decision and have not been referred to in the Forward Plan. However, recommendations for action from the Panel for consideration by Cabinet may do so. This will therefore need to be borne in mind for any recommendations of the Panel.

#### **4. NEXT STEPS**

4.1 Other topics for consideration and inclusion in the Panel's work programme will be considered at each meeting. When considering additional topics, their risk assessment and prioritisation will ensure that the most appropriate items are taken forward to the work programme.

#### **5. APPENDICES**

5.1 Appendix A – Work Programme and Action Tracker 2023/24

#### **6. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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**APPENDIX A – WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER 2023/24**

**PROGRAMME FOR CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT MEETINGS 2023-24**

<b>Meeting 1.</b> <b>19<sup>th</sup> July 2023</b>	<b>Setting the Work Programme and Water</b>
<b>Meeting 2.</b> <b>27<sup>th</sup> September 2023</b>	<b>Sustainable Development</b>
<b>Meeting 3.</b> <b>6<sup>th</sup> December 2023</b>	<b>Waste</b>
<b>Meeting 4.</b> <b>20<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>	<b>Achievements</b>

**CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT – ACTION TRACKER: November 2023**

Date and Min No	Action/Resolutions	Action/Response/Outcome	Status (Complete/in progress)	Deadline for Implementation	Additional commentary
11092019 EP8	Proposal of surveying clients at Best Before Café/Hitchin Food Rescue to assess needs/client base	Community/Partnerships Team	On-going		Initial survey conducted and results received during the pandemic. Community Partnerships liaising with Best Before Café and Hitchin Food Rescue Hub to determine whether any further action is needed on this.
06012020 EP27	Explore what educational content schools provide on waste and recycling, and enable the sharing of best practice on this.	Executive member for Recycling and Waste	Not started		Action to be reviewed once the waste awareness officer is in post (2024)
06012020 EP34	Consider how we can promote eco-friendly action around waste, packaging, and recycling to local food outlets.	Executive member for Recycling and Waste	Not started		Action to be reviewed once the waste awareness officer is in post (2024)
06012020 EP38	Encourage the use of recyclable cups at district events.	Executive member for Recycling and Waste	On-going		The Council's licensing policy states that as part of an application or Event Management Plan, the applicant should include a full environmental assessment of the event with measures to address waste management arrangements including maximising recycling. The policy also states that where plastic vessels are used at a premises, the Council

Page 1 of 1



Date and Min No	Action/Resolutions	Action/Response/Outcome	Status (Complete/in progress)	Deadline for Implementation	Additional commentary
					<p>encourages the use of compostable and/or biodegradable plastics and that suitable recycling provisions should be in place.</p> <p>To be reviewed once the waste awareness officer is in post (2024).</p>
<p>05032020 EP46</p> <p>Page 17</p>	<p>Consider opportunities to reduce idling in the district.</p>	<p>HCC/HCCSP/Licensing/Policy&amp;Strategy</p>	<p><b>On-going</b></p>		<p>NHC's Taxi Licensing Policy states that all taxi and private hire vehicles must switch off engines when stationary and all are required to display an anti-idling sticker provided by the council to remind drivers to switch engines off when stationary.</p> <p>HCCSP and Public Health have developed a microsite to inform, assist and keep residents updated on the latest developments, including local pollution alerts. It also provides campaign resources.  <a href="http://hertfordshire.gov.uk">Let's clear the air (hertfordshire.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>The County Council are investigating what approach should be taken on idling on</p>

Date and Min No	Action/Resolutions	Action/Response/Outcome	Status (Complete/in progress)	Deadline for Implementation	Additional commentary
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 18</p>					<p>their sites, including use of printed assets. Some assets are already available for schools who have travel plans and these can be received by contacting HCC's Active and Safer Travel Team.</p> <p>Policy &amp; Strategy to ask HCCSP to look into the issues and opportunities around idling enforcement.</p>
<p>5032020 P49</p>	<p>Consider how we can best encourage active or public transport to and within our town centres</p>	<p>HCC highways/Transport officer</p>	<p><b>On-going</b></p>		<p>Consider opportunities presented by the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans and the Sustainable Travel Towns Programme.</p> <p>Consider campaign opportunities such as World Car Free Day.</p>